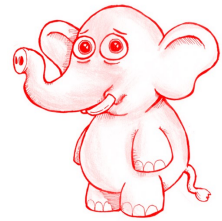


The Tusker Tribune

The Student Newspaper of Somers Middle School

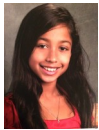


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Fall 2017

Spirit Week Wrap-Up!



By **Julia Wilkinson**
Tusker Tribune Staff
"Go! Go! Go! Go!
Go! Go! Go! Go!"
"Winner!"

"YEAH!!!"

Sound familiar? Well, that is the sound of students at the SMS Middle School. It wasn't an ordinary school day that bright October day at SMS. In fact, the whole week was exhilarating.

October 23rd to 27th, was Red Ribbon Week. Red Ribbon week was first cultivated from a drastic assassination of DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena on February 9th, 1985. "Kiki" was undercover in Mexico before he was abducted.



Once missing, Kiki was tortured and soon killed. In response to this tragedy, communities across the country began wearing red ribbons to show awareness upon the subject of the destruction caused by drugs in America, such as Kiki's death. Red Ribbons are a symbol of this crisis. By 1988, NFP sponsored the first ever Red Ribbon Week Celebration. Many schools across the country celebrate red ribbon week in school. SMS happens to be one of the numerous that does. During the course of Red Ribbon Week, SMS cultivated a series of events.

Continued on page 5



**Set your
clocks back
one hour this
weekend!
Daylight
Savings
Time
ends 2 a.m.
Sunday!**



**Also,
CHECK AND
REPLACE
YOUR
SMOKE
DETECTOR
BATTERIES!**

School Stress Can Take Its Toll on Kids



By **Abigail Searles**
Tusker Tribune Staff
I feel that school brings a lot of stress onto students. I personally

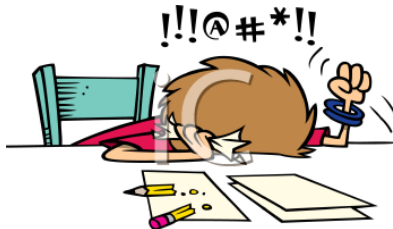
think that I have a lot of stress riding on me when I am at school. Teachers are trying to plan all of these things and some students are just sick and tired of it.

School is a place where kids should feel calm, not stressed and pressured to do all of these things. I know that it is good for us to learn all of this, but is it really worth it to go to school if all you want to do is go home and take a break?

Homework is a big factor in school stress. Kids have after-school

activities and sports and sometimes, there is no time for homework.

My mom is a mother to five kids who all need to go to different places at different times. She is always running around at night making sure that we did our homework and that we all did what we were supposed to do. In the end, are students the only ones affected by school stress?



Tests and quizzes also contribute to school stress. Kids have to memorize all of these words and numbers and then have to worry about getting a good grade. I know that I get really stressed when I have to take a test or a quiz. I know that sometimes other kids feel that way too.

Continued on page 3

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The Tusker Tribune is published online and is featured weekly on the Somers Middle School Website. It is entirely student-written by 6th, 7th and 8th grade students from

Somers Middle School
250 Route 202
Somers, NY, USA.

Any SMS student is eligible to write stories. If interested, please e-mail Advisor Dean Pappas at

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'Check Out' This Library Story!



**By Olivia Biolsi
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Mom was late again to pick me up. Book club had just ended, and when I walked out the door of the library into the chilly October air, mom's car was nowhere to be seen.

Oh well, I said to myself. I'd better go back inside, it's starting to get cold.

Leaving the parking lot behind me, I resolved to wait in the empty lobby until mom showed up. But when I tried the front door, it was locked.

Annoyed, I wandered around to the back of the library, really starting to wish I had stayed inside. It was cold! Finally - *finally!* - I found a back door that was unlocked. It led right into a dusty janitor's closet, and I found myself instantly fighting with a dirty mop. Fumbling for the doorknob, I crashed my way out of the closet and into the library.

Right off, I knew something was different. Obviously, the library was closed, but there was that telltale silence that made you think someone was watching you. I felt a pair of eyes burning into my back...

I turned around slowly. Was it just me, or did it seem a little too dark out? Through the window of the lobby I could see nothing but black. It was only six o'clock....

Dong! Dong! Dong!

I spun around to face the wall behind me. Instead of the white-faced clock that usually hung on the wall, a huge grandfather clock stood under a dark window. As if a 100 year old clock magically appearing in a local library wasn't enough, the clock didn't read 6 o'clock. Both of its ancient hands pointed to midnight!

"Who are you?"

"EEEEEEEEEE!"

Those three words sent me tumbling into a floor-to-ceiling bookshelf that hadn't been dusted in all its years of existence. Fifty hard-cover books toppled onto my head, and I was engulfed in a cloud of dust. Through it wafted a silvery shape, a figure so unnatural it took my mind off my throbbing head.

"What was that?" I asked aloud.

"You see? No one ever treats me like a human anymore."

Anyone who saw my face at that moment would have thought I had just seen a ghost.

"That's right, you just saw a ghost. My name is Mary Sheller. What year is it?"

If I tried to scream, it came out silent. I scrambled for words, but all that came out was a little squeaky sound.

"I knew it!" said the squeaky voice. "You're absolutely horrified of me. Can't you just tell me what year it is?"

My heart finally started beating again, and even though the shock I was trying to register was as thick as the dust surrounding me, I was able to croak out the word "2017."

"2017!" exclaimed the ghost of Mary Sheller. "My body has been dead and buried for 200 years under this library and no one has come back for me." She crossed her

arms and put on a pouty face, and though she had looked about 14 years old before that frown made her seem like my three-year-old brother.

"Wait, I'm dreaming. You can't be dead! You're dead! You're alive! What are you?" I knew even as I said it that this wasn't a dream. The bump on my head was growing to the size of an orange and hurt as bad as the reality of what was happening dawned on me.

Plus, no sane 14-year-old girl dresses up like a pioneer kid anyway.

Unless, of course, they were born in 1803.

"If you hadn't been gaping at my oversized nose, you'd have heard that I am the ghost of Mary Sheller and have been dead for 200 years."

"I heard that. I just wish I hadn't."

She ignored me and turned her back to me, examining the library. All I had been able to notice before was the ghost (understandably), but now I found myself following Mary the Ghost around the library. It was... different.

That grandfather clock was only the beginning. Now my eyes held the same curious look as Mary's, and the whole place looked like it had been built in the early 1800s.

The building itself was smaller than the library I knew. It was wooden, not brick. The few books in the library were hardcover with yellow pages and coated in dust. The wooden floor creaked underneath my feet, but of course that had no effect on Mary's floating skirt (it was so long you couldn't see her shoes).

When she was finished examining the library, Mary turned around to face me. "Is there a monument in my honor anywhere in town?"

I didn't know what to say.

"Uh... how did you die?"

"Oh! It's so tragic!" She looked positively thrilled to be talking about herself again. "What year is it, you said? 2017? Well then, 200 years ago I moved here with my mother, father, and two sisters. They were both older than me, and so terribly mean. They were always getting me into trouble. So when they started building this library for the growing town, it was merely another challenge for my sisters to present

to me. They were always teasing about how timid I was. So they dared me to sneak onto the construction site and find the buried treasure in the ground that they were digging up. When I came to find it-

"Wait, you *believed* that there was treasure underneath here?"

"Yes, pay attention. So when I came to find it, a horse cart trampled over me and I died. They buried me here."

"How did you become a ghost?"

"I chose to do so. I wanted to find the treasure-"

How could a 14-year-old be so stupid?

"-so I became a ghost. But I was trapped in the books before I got the chance, and I've been living inside these pages since then, waiting for someone to free me. One book said that the person to free me would come back in time through a magic portal."

"The janitor's closet?"

It took her a minute to respond. "Yes, the janitor's closet."

Continued on page 3



Stress

From page 1

Finally, do we really have to worry about tests and quizzes?

I think that teachers and other adults in the building should really sit down with the kid

and talk about their schedule. I think that if a teacher took time out of his/her schedule to talk to the students that that would be a great opportunity for students to say how they really feel.

Finally, I think that if kids had no homework, no tests or quizzes and no after-school activities, that they would be a lot happier to go to class. At least I know I would.

Library

From page 2

"So you chose to become a ghost to find the fake treasure you died trying to find."

"Yes."

"You've been existing only inside the books."

"Yes."

"And you've been waiting for me to come back in time through the janitor's closet to 'free' you?"

"Yes. I realize now that my sisters were merely joking when they dared me to find gold. Now I would like to leave these musty old books and head to the stars to live the rest of my life."

I took a deep breath, turned around, and bolted to the exit of the library.

"Wait! You're not dreaming, I'm real! Don't go!"

I shook the whole door when I tried to get out, but it wouldn't open.

"You can't go. Help me get out of here!"

One final kick to the door and I realized it was hopeless. Resolving to do everything I could to get out of this nightmare, I turned to face her.

"Okay. How do I get out of here? I couldn't care less about you."

"Read the book."

"What book?"

"That one." She pointed to the biggest one on the shelf.

"Solving the riddle inside of it will send me up to the stars, and it will also send you home."

I pulled the book off the shelf before she was even finished talking. It took every bit of strength to even lift it, it was so big. A moth fluttered out of it when I opened it.

I read aloud:

*"What is white and died long ago,
Scarier than death and colder than snow?*

*What is something you can befriend...
Or suffer it haunting your life to the end?"*

Mary looked at me expectantly. "Well?" she inquired. "What's the answer?"

"I don't have the slightest clue. What's scarier than death?"

"Dying by getting run over by a horse?"

I laughed. "I doubt it."

"Well, if you're so smart, tell me the answer to get

me out of this haunted shack."

"The abominable snowman?"

"What's that?"

"Never mind. What's white and scary... it can haunt your life but still be friendly?"

I looked at Mary, perplexed. But she seemed frozen in some kind of trance. Her face was even paler than usual, I could almost see right through her. It was actually kind of scary...

"Mary! I've got it!"

The minute I yelled that, Mary doubled over. She gasped for breath like she had been underwater, then looked up at me, smiling.

"I know," she said. "I must have figured it out a bit before you, because all of a sudden I just froze and I couldn't talk. Whoever wrote that cursed book that kept me here must have really wanted you to solve the riddle."

"Mary, that's the most confusing thing I've ever heard but I really couldn't care less because now I get to get out of here and you get to go to heaven and we solved the riddle! The answer is you! It's a ghost!"

Mary smiled at me, and I could see her mouthing the revised words to the poem:

*"I am something
you can befriend... and
leave it in debt to you
until the end. Thank you,
futuristic child! Good-
bye!"*

I couldn't hear a word she said, but I knew what she meant. A shiny wisp of something flew out of the book with

the riddle and surrounded Mary; then she disappeared. Right into nothingness.

I ran out the now-unlocked door of the library into the remnants of what must have been Mary's home (now a ghost town). The same wisp of silver that took Mary away wrapped itself around me and in the blink of an eye, it was 2017 once again.

Mom honked her car horn from the library parking lot, headlights flashing. It was pretty dark by then and I really couldn't see a thing except the stars. And up there in the sky was a perfect constellation, one I had never ever seen before, in the shape of Mary Sheller, the pioneer ghost. And right where her opaque face would have been, a shiny star glittered especially bright. The constellation of the most confusing, self-absorbed dead person I had ever met was winking down at me from the sky.

I'm so honored.



Kneeling for the National Anthem: OK OR NO WAY?



**By Noah Volkman
Tusker Tribune Staff**

As most of us know, many NFL players are kneeling for the national anthem. There are mixed feelings for whether or not they should carry on with it or stop right away.

Even President Trump was getting in on it (more about that later). So, the question is: is kneeling for the national anthem rude and disrespecting to our flag and country, or is it just the NFL players, coaches, and owners exercising the first amendment?

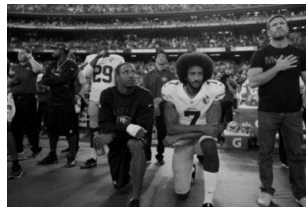


It's Not Okay:

Lots of people are criticizing the NFL and even other sporting leagues for kneeling and/or linking arms during the national anthem.

For starters, people think it is disrespectful to our flag and our country. People think that NFL players are not being a "true American" to those who go into the armed forces to fight for our country's safety and die doing so.

One of the first NFL players to start kneeling for the national anthem was quarterback Colin Kaepernick who started kneeling in August 2016. Kaepernick was a San



Francisco 49er at the time but was released as a free agent, which I think was a good decision because it was really bad publicity for the 'Niners. Over the past few months though, the protesting has grown over the entire league to almost all teams along with their owners, coaches, and other staff. It was all over the news when on September 24, 2017, before the away game against the Chicago Bears, Pittsburgh Steelers offensive tackle Alejandro Villanueva was the only one who even left the locker rooms for the national anthem. The rest of the Steelers didn't stand on the sidelines to avoid criticism related to kneeling or any other racial protests.

The main reason Villanueva came out for the Star Spangled Banner was that he used to be a Spanish Naval Officer.

It has led to the point where President Trump tweeted about the controversy:



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

Follow

Very important that NFL players STAND tomorrow, and always, for the playing of our National Anthem. Respect our Flag and our Country!

3:26 PM - 30 Sep 2017

Continued on Page 5

Solar and Lunar Eclipses are Fascinating to Observe



**By Dan Podlesskiy
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Over the summer there was a solar eclipse. This is a very rare thing to see.

On August 21, 2017 there was an eclipse in Idaho, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. The next solar eclipse will be on April 8, 2024 so your next chance to see the solar eclipse will be in 7 years. However, it will not be in New York. It will be in



Texas which is far away and based on my experiences, it will be hard to find a spot to watch it. The only eclipse in New York will be in 2018 and that won't be a solar eclipse; it will be a lunar one. A lunar eclipse is when the moon appears darkened whereas a solar eclipse is when the moon covers the sun, making it become dark there.

This summer was a great chance to see the solar eclipse, but I think a lunar eclipse would be GREAT to see right at Halloween! solar eclipse but I think that a lunar eclipse would be great to see during Halloween!)

Kneeling From Page 4

Donald J. Trump

If NFL fans refuse to go to games until players stop disrespecting our Flag & Country, you will see change take place fast. Fire or suspend!

9:44 AM - 24 Sep 2017

I guess you could tell which side he's on.

It's Okay

Others think that it's perfectly fine to be kneeling, linking arms, or raising a fist or hand during the national anthem. Most who come to this conclusion believe it's



okay because the players, coaches, owners, etc. are just exercising their First Amendment rights.

The First Amendment prevents Congress from creating laws limiting religion, freedom of speech, freedom



been around for over 220 years.

It falls under freedom of speech because technically, speech is not so specific, so it means these NFL players have the right to sit

or stand, put a hand on their heart or in the air, so on and so forth. The most important part was the freedom of speech part. That's how this falls under the First Amendment that has

of press, etc. The most important part was the freedom of speech part. That's how this falls under the First Amendment that has

As it turns out, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodall has asked owners to ask their players to not kneel during the national anthem. It remains to be seen how effective that request will be.

Red Ribbon

From page 1

One for each day. Monday: Pajama Day Tuesday: Color Wars Day Wednesday: Passion Day Thursday: Wear Black and Gold Friday: Somers Colors.

On Monday, we had a pajama day. It was time to snuggle up in our furry, comfy, pj's and head off to school! Tuesday was the Annual Color Wars! A battle between the grades to determine which has the most spirit! Each grade was provided with a color. 8th Grade: Blue/Purple, 7th Grade: Yellow/Pink, 6th Grade: Green/White Students came into school, the crowd a blur of color. Which grade will win? If you peered into the 6th grade hallway, you would think it was Saint Patrick's Day. The crowd had green headbands, shirts, stretchy socks reaching your knees, and endless white shorts, shirts, socks, sneakers, and more. Students drew with chalk on their faces, and there were green tattoos planted to their skin. Seriously. Saint Patrick's Day.

Personally, I believe that 7th grade students had the most accessories. Girls used stunning pink lipstick to mark their faces. Some wore bright pink tutus and yellow shirts. Yellow hairbands, and socks, they had outdone themselves. Boys wore yellow, and some long pink socks, stretching up to their knees. But was it enough to win?

But the 8th grade used their colors to their advantage. Blue and Purple? Easy. The hallway looked like a painting. Endless blue and purple streaks blended together, to make one master-

piece. Stylish blue sneakers, and stunning purple headbands. But the big question is: who won? I'll give you a hint: Masterpiece. Yup.

Even though it was Saint Patty's on the second floor, and pink tutu/lipstick-sunny-long-socks on the 3rd floor, the 8th graders painted a masterpiece, enough to get the win.

Wednesday was glorious. Passion day, wear what inspires you. Students wore soccer jackets, lacrosse shirts, football jerseys, gymnastics coats, and even swim team sweatshirts. Thursday, the school was littered with black and gold students. Why? In September, there was a hurricane that hit Texas known as Hurricane Harvey. Harvey had destroyed many schools, flooding the area until hardly anything was left. Up until today, many children still can't attend their school and many other communities are attempting to help as much as possible.

Our community is one of them. Miller Elementary School was one of the victims of the Hurricane. The school was destroyed. To help support their attempts to fix the damage, SMS students wore black and gold—the Miller school colors. Later that Thursday afternoon, SMS' Student Council hosted a "Hurricane Handball Tournament" to raise money for Miller. Many teams competed, but only one team succeeded in winning the golden trophy: The Thic Pickles. The team consisted of only one sort of grade: 8th graders. This was a phenomenal way of ending their years of Middle School.

Continued on page 6

Red Ribbon

From page 5

Lastly, was Friday. Friday was Somers Colors day. The halls were scattered with Red and Black. Cheerleaders wore their cheer shirts, football players wore football gear, and many other students wore their Tusker possessions.

Finally, at the end of the day, was one event students have been waiting for: The pep rally. The pep rally was a contest with unanimously picked students to compete in three games against teachers of the grade: A Pie Eating contest, Mummy Rapping, and Musical Chairs.

Not all students got to participate, but for the few who did, congratulations to those who won. 6th Grader Si-bora Selimaj was one student who participated. "I think the pep rally was exciting and scary at the same time,"

Selimaj comments. "I got to scream for my friends, but I was frightened on stage. It was still fun, even though I lost the mummy wrap."

Overall, Red Ribbon week was a spectacular week for SMS. But remember, this event wouldn't have existed is Kiki hadn't risked his life for our health.

Scenes from the 7/8 Pep Rally!

